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SUMMARY OF NONGOMA DIETARY SURVEY.

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March, 1950.

SUMMARY OF NONGOMA DIETARY SURVEY.

Indications that Natives living in the Nongoma district of Northern Zululand have a more varied and a more adequate diet than is generally supposed in the Native Reserves are given in a report to the Department of Native Affairs on a dietary survey of 42 Zulu families carried out last winter June and July, 1949 by officials of the Department of Health.

While mealies and kaffircorn are staple items of diet, the report shows that most of these families also consume quantities of pumpkin, melon, dried peas and milk (including sour milk), while analysis reveals that 73 per cent. of the families receive an adequate number of calories and Vitamin C, 85 per cent. adequate protein, 90 per cent. adequate Vitamin A and 99 per cent. adequate Vitamin B.1. The only serious deficiency is in calcium, which only 29 per cent. of the families receive in adequate quantities.

On the advice of the Native Commissioner at Nongoma, the survey team of two dieticians and three Native assistants chose three groups of families living at spots between 17 and 30 miles from the village. A native assistant stayed for a week in the kraal of each of the families under investigation, in order to keep full records of meals served, food eaten and left over, etc. Their entries were checked by the dieticians, who visited each family daily.

The kraals surveyed varied from a modest stone cottage, in which one educated kraalhead lived largely according to European custom, to fairly well-kept mud or beehive huts in which some Zulus were in comparative comfort and very primitive and dirty kraals where other families led a backward existence.

An interesting family was that of a Native malarial assistant, employed by the Health Department, who had improved on the usual smoky beehive hut by building himself a wood and iron house, kept his own vegetable garden and gave his family three fairly well-

balanced meals a day, instead of the more primitive two. His family was both healthy and strong compared with their neighbours.

The commonest foods among the various groups were mealie-meal, milk, pumpkin and melon, all of which were eaten by at least 85 per cent. of the families in average amounts of between 10 and 18 ounces per head per day. Other foods in their order of popularity were mealie grains, dried peas and beans, kaffir-corn, imfino (spinach and wild greens), potatoes and sweet potatoes, meat (mainly from goats), sugar, poultry and amadumbes, while a few families used small quantities of tea, coffee, curry powder, flour, bread, condensed milk, oranges and peanuts.

Kaffir beer was drunk in considerable quantities by adults. This is an excellent source of the Vitamin B. group; but unfortunately so much of the beer was consumed by visitors that it was impossible to compute the amount consumed per head and hence it had to be omitted from the survey.

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